

You have received this "Request for Applications (RFA)" through USAID Internet site. If you have any questions regarding this RFA you may contact the USAID Official named in the cover letter of this solicitation. If you are not using Word 97 to view this document, you will have to save the document in the format of the wordprocessor that you are using in order to view and print any standard forms. The number of pages contained in this electronic copy may not exactly correspond to the hard paper copy, although generally all the information is contained herein.

The Agency is not responsible for any data/text that may not be received when retrieving this document electronically. If the recipient does not notify the contact person that they have obtained this document then any amendments to the document may not be available to the recipients. Amendments to solicitation documents generally contain information critical to the submission of an application.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
REGIONAL MISSION FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS
KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, & UZBEKISTAN

Acquisition & Assistance Office



Issuance Date: February 25, 2003

Closing Date: March 18, 2003

Closing Time: 10:00 a.m. (Almaty time)

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) NO. DM 115-03-008 USAID/CAR Civil Society Support Initiative.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for an Assistance Agreement from an organization/consortium for funding a program for USAID/CAR Civil Society Support Initiative. The authority for the RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objective to Strengthened Democratic Culture Among Citizens and Targeted Institutions. Please refer to the Program Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the assistance program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under the agreement.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately \$17,000,000.00 in total USAID funding to be allocated over a three-year period in the five focus countries.

USAID/CAR expects to award one Cooperative Agreement to implement this program. However, despite USAID/CAR's strong preference for a single award, USAID/CAR is not ruling out the possibility of multiple awards, by country, geographic region, or sector. Nevertheless, to be considered responsive, applications should propose activities in all five countries.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

This RFA consists of this cover letter and the following:

1. Section A - Grant Application Format;
2. Section B - Selection Criteria;
3. Section C - Program Description;
4. Section D - Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Applicant/Grantee;

For the purposes of this RFA, the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer".

If you decide to submit an application, it should be received by the closing date and time indicated at the top of this cover letter at the place designated below for receipt of applications. Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in envelopes with the name and address of the applicant and RFA DM115-03-008 inscribed thereon, to:

(By U.S. Mail) John F. Lord
USAID/DOS
7030 Almaty Place
Washington, DC 20521-7030

(All Other Means) John F. Lord
USAID/CAR
Park Palace Building
41 Kazybek bi Street
Almaty
Republic of Kazakhstan

Applicants are requested to submit both technical and cost portions of their applications in separate volumes. Award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) offers the greatest value.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. In addition, final award of any resultant grant(s) cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant; should circumstances prevent award of a cooperative agreement, all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

The preferred method of distribution of USAID procurement information is via the Internet. This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from the Agency Web Site. The World Wide Web Address is <http://www.usaid.gov>. Select Business and Procurement from the home page, then "USAID Procurements". On the following screen, select "Download Available USAID Solicitations". Receipt of this RFA through INTERNET must be confirmed by written notification to the contact person noted below. It is the responsibility of the recipient of the application document to ensure that it has been received from INTERNET in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

In the event of an inconsistency between the documents comprising this RFA, it shall be resolved by the following descending order of precedence:

- (a) Section B - Selection Criteria;
- (b) Section A - Grant Application Format;
- (c) Section C - Program Description;
- (d) this Cover Letter.

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing to John F. Lord, via facsimile at 1 (413) 771-5698 or via internet at AlmatyCO@usaid.gov. If there are problems in downloading the RFA off the INTERNET, please contact the USAID INTERNET Coordinator on (202) 712-4442. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

Sincerely,

John F. Lord
Agreement Officer

Table of Contents	Page
SECTION A - GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT.....	5
PREPARATION GUIDELINES.....	5
COST APPLICATION FORMAT.....	5
SECTION B - SELECTION CRITERIA.....	9
SECTION C - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	11
SECTION D.....	25
PART I - CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES.....	25
PART II - OTHER STATEMENTS OF RECIPIENT.....	30
CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS.....	33
KEY INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION NARCOTICS OFFENSES AND DRUG TRAFFICKING.....	35
PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION NARCOTICS OFFENSES AND DRUG TRAFFICKING.....	36

SECTION A - GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT

PREPARATION GUIDELINES

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Section **B** addresses the technical evaluation procedures for the applications. Applications which are submitted late or are incomplete run the risk of not being considered in the review process. Late applications will be considered for award if the Agreement Officer determines it is in the Government's interest.

Applications shall be submitted in two separate parts: (a) technical and (b) cost or business application. Technical portions of applications should be submitted in an original and 5 copies and cost portions of applications in an original and 5 copies.

The application should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below. Applications must be submitted no later than the date and time and to the location indicated on the cover page of this RFA.

Technical applications should be specific, complete and presented concisely, not in excess of 60 pages. The applications should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The applications should take into account the technical evaluation criteria found in Section **B**. Because USAID will consider making separate awards by country, applications should be structured in a manner that program elements, activities and budgets are identifiable and separable by country. However, only applications for a 5-country program will be considered responsive.

Applicants should retain for their records one copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany their application. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. To facilitate the competitive review of the applications, USAID will consider only applications conforming to the format prescribed below.

COST APPLICATION FORMAT

The Cost or Business Application is to be submitted under separate cover from the technical application. Certain documents are required to be submitted by an applicant in order for an Grant Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources.

The following sections describe the documentation that applicants for Assistance award must submit to USAID prior to award. While there is no page limit for this portion, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary detail to address the following:

A. A copy of the program description that was detailed in the applicant's program description, on a 3-1/2" diskette or CD ROM formatted in MS Word.

B. Include a budget with an accompanying budget narrative which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget must be submitted using Standard Form 424 and 424A which can be downloaded from the USAID web site, http://www.usaid.gov/procurement_bus_opp/procurement/forms/sf424/;

- the breakdown of all costs associated with the program according to costs of, if applicable, headquarters, regional and/or country offices;

- the breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization involved in the program;

- the costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with local in-country technical assistance;

- the breakdown of the financial and in-kind contributions of all organizations involved in implementing this Cooperative Agreement;

- potential contributions of non-USAID or private commercial donors to this Cooperative Agreement;

- your procurement plan for commodities (note that contraceptives and other health commodities will not be provided under this Cooperative Agreement).

C. A current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;

D. Required certifications and representations (as attached):

E. Cost share has been recommended to be 15% of the total estimated amount of USAID funding.

F. Applicants who do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from their cognizant agency shall also submit the following information:

1. copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;

2. projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart;

3. A copy of the organization's accounting manual.

G. Applicants should submit any additional evidence of responsibility deemed necessary for the Grant Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted should substantiate that the Applicant:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award.

2. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental.

3. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.

4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and

5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

H. Applicants that have never received a grant, cooperative agreement or contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual. If a copy has already been submitted to the U.S. Government, the applicant should advise which Federal Office has a copy.

In addition to the aforementioned guidelines, the applicant is requested to take note of the following:

I. Unnecessarily Elaborate Applications - Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this RFA are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate art work, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

J. Acknowledgement of Amendments to the RFA - Applicants shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this RFA by signing and returning the amendment. The Government must receive the acknowledgement by the time specified for receipt of applications.

K. Receipt of Applications - Applications must be received at the place designated and by the date and time specified in the cover letter of this RFA.

L. Submission of Applications:

1. Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages (1) addressed to the office specified in the Cover Letter of this RFA, and (2) showing the time specified for receipt, the RFA number, and the name and address of the applicant.

2. Faxed applications will not be considered; however, applications may be modified by written or faxed notice, if that notice is received by the time specified for receipt of applications.

M. Preparation of Applications:

1. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's risk.

2. Each applicant shall furnish the information required by this RFA. The applicant shall sign the application and print or type its name on the Cover Page of the technical and cost applications. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

3. Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, should:

(a) Mark the title page with the following legend:

"This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed - in whole or in part - for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this applicant as a result of - or in connection with - the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets ; and

(b) Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend:

"Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application."

N. Explanation to Prospective Applicants - Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this RFA must request it in writing within three weeks of receipt of the application to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a Grant will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this RFA will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this RFA, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

O. Agreement Award:

1. The Government may award one or more Agreements resulting from this RFA to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) conforming to this RFA offers the greatest value (see also Section B of this RFA). The Government may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application (see Section III, Selection Criteria), (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

a. As stated in the cover letter, the Government may decide to make one or more awards on the basis of country, geographic region, or sector. Therefore, applications should be structured in a manner that program elements, activities and budgets are identifiable and separable by country.

2. The Government may award one or more Grant(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint.

3. Neither financial data submitted with an application nor representations concerning facilities or financing, will form a part of the resulting Grant(s).

P. Authority to Obligate the Government - The Grant Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Grant may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Grant or a specific, written authorization from the Grant Officer.

Q. The Contractor/Recipient is reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the contractor/recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all subcontracts/subawards issued under this contract/agreement.

SECTION B - SELECTION CRITERIA

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular RFA. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants should organize the narrative sections of their applications in the same order as the selection criteria.

The technical applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. Thereafter, the cost application of all applicants submitting a technically acceptable application will be opened and costs will be evaluated for general reasonableness, allowability, and allocability. To the extent that they are necessary (if award is made based on initial applications), negotiations will then be conducted with all applicants whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award. Awards will be made to responsible applicants whose applications offer the greatest value, cost and other factors considered.

Awards will be made based on the ranking of proposals according to the technical selection criteria identified below.

I. Mandatory Criteria

Applications must satisfy this criterion to be eligible (e.g. responsible) for further consideration.

1. This includes but is not limited to the criteria that applicants must be a U.S. Non-Government Organization (NGO) or other type of legal entity accredited or able to obtain accreditation to operate in CAR.
2. Cost Sharing, Matching Arrangement an/or In-Kind Contribution of 15% of the USAID amount is encouraged.

“Cost-sharing” means the application presents cash from non-US Federal sources which the offeror will use in the performance of the award. “Matching-Arrangement” means the application presents cash from non-US Federal sources which will be provided at a set ratio (e.g. for every 2 dollars USAID obligates the recipient will provide 1 dollar.) “In-Kind Contribution” means the donation of tangible property (such as computers, medical and lab equipment, but excluding real) or services (such as rent, utilities, etc.) provided by the recipient to the Government.

II. Weighted Criteria

Applications received in response to this request for applications will be evaluated against the following selection criteria:

A. Technical

MAXIMUM 100 POINTS

1. **Technical Capacity (max=30 points):** The demonstrated technical ability of the organization will be assessed through its mission statement, technical expertise, and past technical performance; strategic goals and objectives; available human and material resources; and operational management.
2. **Strategic Fit (max=20 points):** The likelihood that the programs for which funding is sought will make a recognizable, significant and measurable contribution towards achieving the strategic objective and one or more of the intermediate and lower results identified in this RFA. Note the importance of the indicators linked to activities for which proposals are being requested in judging this criteria. In addition, a proper strategic fit should also take into consideration the particularities of the civil society development in each of the countries of Central Asia.
3. **Past Performance and Relevant Experience (max=10 points):** Given that the projects that USAID is eliciting in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are based on an evaluation of the specific economic, political, cultural and development conditions of the countries, experience working in these countries and/or experience in the NIS region is very important to demonstrating an organization’s ability to carry out proposed activities.
4. **Technical Approach (max=30 points):** Creativity, innovation and feasibility of the proposed technical approach and monitoring/evaluation mechanism, i.e., can the proposed technical approach reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes? Given the differences in civil society development, environment, and challenges, applicants are encouraged to consider varied programmatic approaches for each Central Asian country. Appropriateness of the applicant's plan to incorporate gender issues into the overall activity.

5. **Key Personnel (max=10 points):** The qualifications of key personnel will be an important factor impacting the project's chances of success. The technical background, work experience, language and area knowledge of key personnel will be assessed against the needs of the project.

B. Cost

MAXIMUM 20 POINTS

1. **Cost Sharing, Matching and In-Kind Contributions (max=5 points):** Demonstrated ability to leverage other donor resources: NGOs and development partners should demonstrate their willingness/ability to identify private, unrestricted resources for basic support costs. Such funding may come from many sources including privately generated programming funds from domestic constituencies; commodities or other resources made available by other non-U.S. Government sources. Definite commitments from other sources for specific programs should be specifically mentioned and documented. USAID will also consider applications which are collaboratively prepared between organizations.
2. **Cost Effectiveness (max=10 points):** The cost-effectiveness of the organization's approach and its ability to make a positive measurable impact on a wide base of beneficiaries. Applicants must present a detailed budget including all sources of funds allocated and a detailed description of each budget line item requested.

SECTION C - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Description USAID/CAR Civil Society Support Initiative

I. Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development Central Asia Regional Mission (USAID/CAR) is seeking applications from qualified applicants to implement a program to provide broad-spectrum support to civil society in the five republics of post-Soviet Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). USAID anticipates awarding a three-year cooperative agreement resulting from this RFA.

II. Purpose

Work performed under this award will contribute to the achievement of USAID/CAR's Strategic Objective 2.1 – "Strengthened Democratic Culture Among Citizens and Targeted Institutions" – as outlined in the USAID Assistance Strategy for Central Asia, 2001-2005.¹ The primary objective of this activity is to support the development of stronger and more sustainable civic organizations through a combination of technical assistance, training, and direct grant support. Consistent with the thesis promulgated by social scientists dating back at least to Alexis de Tocqueville, the promotion of the "associational life" of civil society is a cornerstone to any functioning democracy.²

As part of their proposal, applicants are requested to develop tangible, results-oriented indicators capable of measuring progress both in the development of indigenous civic organizations, and the impact these organizations' activities are having on their communities and constituencies. In addition, the applicants are required to work with the existing civil society results framework that has been developed by the Democracy and Media Office, which can be found in Section VIII.

III. Background

Support to civil society (broadly construed here as the sphere between society and the state, serving as a two-way channel both for lobbying/defending interests and information transmission) form the backbone of the work of USAID/CAR's Democracy and Media (DM) office. Since 1994, USAID/CAR has supported civil society in Central Asia through a variety of mechanisms, including direct grants, cooperative agreements with American and international implementing partner organizations, and training/exchange programs.³ This commitment is grounded in the assumption that a strong, vibrant civil society is a necessary precondition to the development of other democratic institutions. For example, the development of strong legal and political institutions such as an independent judiciary or parliament is seriously complicated in the absence of a civil society that serves to mediate relations between the state and its citizenry by defending society's interests, checking and blunting the excesses of the state, while at the same time linking the state with its citizens in terms of information flows and resource distribution. Indeed, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serve as key vehicles for projects in all of USAID/CAR's technical offices, ranging from the Energy and Water office's use of citizen-organized water users' associations, to the Health and Population office's support to associations of family practitioners to the priority put on association-building in the Enterprise and Finance portfolio. While other technical offices' interactions with and support to civil society organizations clearly have an ancillary benefit to the Mission's democracy-building portfolio, it nevertheless falls to the DM office to assume primary responsibility for supporting the development of civil society per se, rather than as a mechanism for advancing other technical objectives.

By almost any measure, civil society in Central Asia has grown, if not flourished, in the 11 years following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Both in terms of its breadth (geographical, sectoral and popular footprint) and depth (the institutional strength and sustainability of civic organizations), civil society has made impressive inroads. While quantitative indicators are often a blunt instrument at best, it nevertheless bears noting the numerical growth in the civil society sector in Central Asia. From a few hundred scattered informal groupings of citizens during the late

¹ The strategy can be found at www.usaid.gov/regions/europe_eurasia/car.

² See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, volumes 1 & 2.

³ For more information on previous USAID-supported civil society programs in Central Asia, see: <http://www.dec.org>.

1980s and early 1990s, the non-governmental sector in Central Asia has grown exponentially over the past decade, and now encompasses over 10,000 organizations of varying sorts, from small, community-based organizations and initiative groups to large, regional NGOs with full-time staff and multiple offices. Civil society has also grown more diverse and dynamic during this time. Whereas the non-government sector during the early 1990s was dominated by the image of clusters of citizen-intelligentsia literally gathering in kitchens to discuss and organize around issues of the day, NGOs, CBOs and community groups have now grown organizationally, and in doing so have come to represent, service, and defend growing constituencies in society, such as women, youth, consumers, ethnic minorities, etc. It is worth noting that civil society has developed very differently in various countries and civil society organizations play a qualitatively different role in the political arena of each of the respective five Central Asian countries. For this reason, the needs of civil society in each of the Central Asian countries appear to be quite different. The strength of the third sector,⁴ as measured by the USAID/Europe and Eurasia Bureau-designed NGO Sustainability Index,⁵ has steadily improved in recent years, reflecting both the intensive focus put on civil society development by international donor agencies, as well as the natural growth and evolution of local NGOs themselves.

IV. Challenges

The development of civil society, despite macro-level growth, has been fraught with challenges. A number of factors, both internally within NGOs and in their larger operating environment, continue to conspire to hamper the growth of the third sector in Central Asia. Externalities continue to limit the political, social and political space within which NGOs may operate. Government-led or –inspired harassment and intimidation of civil society actors continues to be an issue throughout Central Asia, in particular for those organizations that engage in potentially sensitive issues such as human rights, legal education, or anti-corruption campaigns. Less deliberate but no less corrosive to civil society growth is the effect of widespread corruption and ignorance in government bodies that interact with NGOs at various levels, for example the tax police, and justice ministry registration bodies. While the formal legal climate for NGOs has improved in all CAR countries, save Turkmenistan, implementation of relative statutes remains problematic at best.⁶ Reflecting the region’s strong Soviet legacies, lingering suspicions towards the non-state sector by state agencies have proven difficult to overcome, with NGOs alternately branded as foreign agents, opposition, money-laundering façades, or grant-hungry mercenaries.

In addition to a complicated political environment, civil society growth in Central Asia is limited by the region’s ongoing economic crises. The centrifugal economic effects following the fall of the Soviet Union (high unemployment and booming under-employment, degradation of capital stocks, and massive de-industrialization, for example) continue to fester in all five CAR countries, and this impacts the growth of civil society in two ways. First of all, it has crippled the growth of a middle class and private enterprises – two of the traditional sources of recruits and support for civil society in developed countries. Furthermore, the culture of corruption and lack of a rule of law that have flourished in the post-Soviet economic meltdown continue to drive those businesses that do succeed underground, thus hindering the formation of a culture of corporate philanthropy. Civic activism by commercial businesses, as a result, remains scattered, low profile, and largely the function of ascriptive and/or informal ties such as ethnicity, personal relationship, etc. The lack of a viable domestic economic base of support for civil society has resulted in most Central Asian NGOs being highly dependent on outside (foreign) donor funds. This external orientation has a deleterious effect on civil society actors: it ruptures their ties to local constituencies, thus contributing further to suspicion of NGOs among society at large, while simultaneously stunting NGOs’ capacity to form and develop autonomously around internal missions based on real needs.

⁴ Social scientists tend to refer to civil society as the “third sector,” with the first and second sectors referring to the state and business sectors, respectively.

⁵ The NGO Index measures NGO sustainability as a combination of seven different “dimensions,” each of which is assessed separately on an annual basis by an expert review committee. The seven dimensions are: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, infrastructure, advocacy, service provision and public image.

⁶ Turkmenistan is the only CAR country that currently lacks a dedicated NGO law, and instead continues to rely on the Soviet-style 1992 “Law on Public Associations.” However, Turkmenistan does boast a relatively progressive Civil Code – adopted with considerable foreign technical expertise and financial support – that establishes relatively clear and unambiguous registration procedures for NGOs. Despite this, almost no NGOs have been registered in Turkmenistan in the past three years.

Internal factors within NGOs themselves also present considerable challenges to civil society development efforts in Central Asia. With notable exceptions, most Central Asian NGOs continue to be weakly developed, institutionally, exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics: strong, domineering leader-founders, undemocratic governance structures, weak accountability and management, and a “catch-all” universalistic attitude that encourages the pursuit of grants over the internal priorities of the organization and/or its constituency. As a result, civil society has had a difficult time evolving from a population of competing “non-governmental personalities,” to the classic de Toquevillian vision of non-governmental organizations per se. Other manifestations of this institutional weakness include a lack of mission on the part of many NGOs, compounded by financial unsustainability, and a vulnerability to cooptation by outside forces such as government-organized, quasi-NGOs (“GONGO”s), political parties, business interests, etc.

Although specific circumstances vary from country to country, the development of vibrant civil societies in Central Asia is also challenged by the russification of the third sector as a whole. On the one hand, donor-funded programs continue to be based on Russian as the lingua franca in Central Asia. On the other, the russification of the NGO sector reflects its origins in the disenfranchised intelligentsia and urban Soviet middle class – teachers, doctors, scientists, etc. This phenomenon continues to manifest itself in that Central Asian NGOs remain disproportionately urban, Russian-speaking, highly-educated, and cosmopolitan. The resulting gap with Central Asian communities that are often rural, less educated, and titular language-speaking presents significant challenges to the development of civil society in Central Asia.

Compounding these challenges, providing regional support to civil society in Central Asia must deal with very different development trajectories in each of the region’s separate countries. These specific challenges include but are not limited to the following.

In Kazakhstan, cooperation with local and central government bodies appears to have improved, and Kazakh NGOs have been able to participate in drafting several laws, but this recognition is sometimes quite shallow, and intended purely for public relations purposes. Harassment by state agencies continues to be a problem for NGOs. For the most part, Kazakhstani NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) are subject to low-level harassment by corrupt and/or ignorant officials, primarily in the tax police, whose either greed or ignorance of the law leads to unwarranted searches, fines and tax harassment. Other NGOs, however, and in particular those engaged in potentially sensitive areas such as human rights protection, media work (freedom of speech), or anti-corruption, have been subjected to a hurricane of abuse from agents of the state. Despite obvious successes in economic reforms, financial sustainability remains the weakest dimension of NGO sustainability in Kazakhstan. The public perception of NGOs, moreover, continues to be caught between dominant public stereotypes that continue to harm the sector’s growth.

In Kyrgyzstan, a relatively weak state and a contentious society provides for a political environment more conducive to grassroots civic advocacy than is the case in most of the other Central Asian countries. NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, however, are not as sophisticated in their ability to lobby and advocate on various issues as they could be given their opportunities to do so. Likewise, while Kyrgyz NGOs are increasingly involved with local communities, they are not yet able to translate these relationships into real constituents that will support the NGOs in grassroots advocacy campaigns. Finally, the poor state of the Kyrgyz economy may make donor financial assistance to NGOs more important than in Kazakhstan.

In Tajikistan, while NGOs have been recognized by the government and become an integral part of civil society, economic difficulties imply serious impediment for NGO sustainability. Organizational capacity of Tajik NGOs continues to be one of the weakest dimensions of the sector. Against a backdrop of persistent economic depression and a legislative environment that by and large does not recognize income generation by non-commercial organizations, Tajik NGOs are increasing their reliance on foreign donors. This, as a result, erodes Tajik NGOs’ ability to conduct strategic planning and internal development in a fully autonomous manner.

In Uzbekistan, NGOs have problems similar to those in the other Central Asian countries. Harassment of certain activists and NGOs involved in human rights or other advocacy activities by the government has been frequently noted. Despite increasingly positive rhetoric towards NGOs at the national political level, local government officials generally remain suspicious of civil society organizations. Furthermore, the lack of currency convertibility or a reliable and efficient banking system continues to severely impede foreign donors’ ability to provide grants to local organizations in a transparent and consistent manner.-

In Turkmenistan, the NGO sector remains the weakest in the former Soviet Union republics. Not a single independent organization was able to register as an NGO over the past few years, and the absolute majority of NGOs continue to work without registration. Even historically neutral organizations, like environmental groups, experienced hard pressure from law-enforcement agencies for implementing activities without having been registered. There has been no new NGO law adopted, and the existing Civil Code is often ignored by the officials and not enforced. Economic difficulties in the country, a lack of any tax incentives for businessmen, and limited information about the NGO sector constrain local business philanthropy. In addition, NGOs lack professional legal services.

Activities proposed in response to this RFA should enable Central Asian civil society actors such as NGOs, CBOs, initiative groups, as well as various farmer, professional, business, and trade associations that are beginning to lobby, to become more professional, institutionally sustainable and active, while at the same time building and expanding ties with their societies. Activities should also target specific problems that NGOs face in each of the Central Asian country.

V. Approach

The activities envisioned under this RFA will represent a significant departure from more traditional, grants-based NGO support programs. While a robust grant assistance component is called for, it will merely be one element of a full-spectrum approach to supporting the development and growth of civil society in Central Asia. The USAID/CAR Civil Society Support Initiative will support the development of stronger, more sustainable civic organizations by engaging with civil society simultaneously on several levels: at the grassroots level, with smaller, community-based NGOs; at the intermediate level, by supporting networks of intermediary support organizations (ISOs); and at the national level, through intensive cooperation with more advanced NGOs. Additionally, this program will actively work to strengthen the legal footing of NGOs in Central Asia, both by working actively to improve the legislative climate for the civil society sector, while providing on-the-ground consultations and legal advice to civil society activists. Democratic governance structures, participatory grant-related decision making processes, and a primary emphasis on localization will ensure the maximum degree of transparency within the program itself and preclude charges of opaqueness or favoritism – charges made repeatedly against international programs in Central Asia.

The main focus of this program will be the establishment and full localization of networks of independent intermediary support organizations. These organizations – themselves local NGOs – will serve as the primary vehicle for civil society support delivery under this project. Previous USAID/CAR-supported programs have worked to build such networks by developing and institution-strengthening independent “Civil Society Support Centers” (CSSCs). Consistent with this strategy, the program resulting from this RFA will entail a qualitatively new division-of-labor between the main USAID implementing partner and its local implementing partners (CSSCs) in each of the five Central Asian republics. It should be noted here that the CSSC concept refers here to a *model*⁷, rather than to concrete organizations, and thus the activity implementer will have the opportunity to work with and/or develop new CSSCs, rather than be obliged to work exclusively with existing CSSCs. The implementing partner chosen via this RFA will be required to conduct an initial assessment of current and potential CSSC partners at the beginning of the program. The winning applicant will be expected to fund existing CSSCs for up to three months following the project’s start date, pending the completion of this assessment, the results of which will identify NGO-CSSC partners, and thus the number and distribution of CSSCs to be supported under this initiative. As described in further detail in the following sections, the ultimate goal of this project – and thus the prime indicator of its success or failure – is the establishment of independent country-level networks of CSSCs that, by the end of this program, will be capable of directly contracting with foreign donors, including USAID and the business community, where such opportunities exist. The USAID implementing partner(s) for this project will be expected to expedite these connections. Because CSSCs are oftentimes existing NGOs that also serve as intermediary support organizations, by channeling civil society support delivery through the CSSCs, this project will not only help to localize programmatic responsibilities, but will also strengthen the institutional capacity of partner NGOs where the CSSCs will be based. The program will also aim to foster the relationship between civil society and government, especially at the local level. NGOs should serve as an effective link between citizens and government, and a tool to advocate for citizens’ rights, but not to substitute for government.

⁷ The term “intermediary support organization (ISO)” is commonly used to refer to a broad category of organizations that include, for example, resource centers, internet centers, etc.. The “CSSCs” referred to in this RFA are a type of ISO.

VI. Implementation and Proposed Activities

USAID/CAR's new Civil Society Support Initiative will vary in its programmatic approach and emphasis from country to country, in concert with local conditions. Broadly, however, the strategy will focus on two sets of activities to be implemented under this program: a main effort, focused on strengthening indigenous civic organizations, and a secondary project dedicated to improving the legal environment for civil society in Central Asia. This strategy is rooted in the fundamental assumption that a vigorous civil society is key to the growth of a strengthened democratic culture among citizens and key socio-political institutions including parliament, schools, etc.

USAID/CAR anticipates that activities described herein will be implemented in all five Central Asian republics. Turkmenistan, due to the increasing divergence of its political and economic development trajectories from that of its neighbors, will require special attention in program design, as described in **Section VII** of this document.

While the winning applicant will be expected to design a more detailed program and activity description with specific indicators of progress towards achieving program goals, the priority areas for program activity can broadly be summarized as follows:

Strategic goal	Illustrative types of activities
Strengthening indigenous civic organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of CSSC associations into functioning, stand-alone networks. • Delivery of full range of NGO support services via geographically-dispersed CSSCs and CSSC network. • Small community development-via-advocacy grants program, managed by the CSSCs. • Regional grant fund for institutional support to mature NGOs.
Improving the legal environment for civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working at the national level with parliament, government ministries, and other counterparts to improve national legislation affecting the NGO sector.⁸ • Providing day-to-day consultations for civil society clientele on legal issues affecting them (registration, tax issues, etc.)

Consistent with this framework, applicants should describe planned activities in the following areas:

A. CSSC & CSSC Network Development

The recipient will design a program to develop in each CAR country⁹ an indigenous network of local CSSCs that, by the completion date of the project, will be capable of contracting directly with USAID or other international donors. This will provide a strong incentive for country-level networks to remain functional and coherent following the end of this project. Each network will, with multiple member CSSCs, represent a national partner for civil society support program implementation. The nationwide geographical "footprint" of this program will be complemented at the local level, where CSSCs will be expected to expand their activities into surrounding communities, both urban and rural, depending on the locale. Civil Society Support Centers will serve as the primary instrument for delivering services to civil society under this project, and will serve a number of different functions. USAID/CAR expects that CSSCs will provide at least the following services:

⁸ It should be noted that NGOs are affected by a wide range of legislation, above and beyond NGO laws. For example, tax codes, laws on state purchases, and media laws all are likely to impact civil society in one way or another.

⁹ Turkmenistan's unique conditions may warrant an alternative approach. See Section VII.

- Resource center: Each CSSC will host a resource center for local civil society actors, providing technical (for example, photocopying, telephone and computer/internet services), training and other support to interested parties either for free or, in some cases, an appropriate fee. This is critical for the NGO/CBO communities of Central Asia, many of whom (especially in outlying areas) suffer not only from a lack of technical resources (telephone, computer equipment, etc.) but from a lack of basic information about NGOs, the tenets of organizing, community outreach, and other key topics. The resources and potential areas of involvement of these centers should be determined for each country in accordance with their various needs. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, CSSCs should be able to provide NGOs and local community leaders with the resources and skills to analyze government budgets, which should be publicly available in that country. This mechanism would allow for clear means for advocacy on a variety of locally important issues.
- Training program: CSSCs will play the lead role in managing an NGO training program in their communities. While training modules may be jointly developed by the CSSC network, with assistance from the cooperative agreement recipient, CSSCs will be responsible for determining the frequency and topics of trainings. Examples of existing NGO training topics include: fundraising, volunteerism, membership/leadership development, etc.. It should be noted that these trainings may be designed to include not only civil society actors (NGO leaders, community activists, initiative groups, etc.), but other parties as well, where appropriate, such as local government officials or business leaders. This will help to address the often-ad hoc nature of current donor-funded training programs, where the lack of a transparent system for training, certifying, selecting, and evaluating trainers has hampered their effectiveness. The implementer must be able to offer different levels of training with different content in each country where it will work. For example in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, advocacy training can be provided on a more sophisticated level, whereas in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, such training may be at a more basic level with a different focus. It will be incumbent upon the RFA awardee–CSSC network partnership to develop a sound program for training-of-trainers, as well as criteria for trainer selection, quality control, and certification of trainers. CSSCs mentored by the implementer are expected to conduct preliminary assessments for each country to address specific training needs.
- Liaising with the international donor community: Each CSSC will also function as a de facto two-way informational hub, helping to establish and maintain contacts between international organizations and local civic organizations on the ground. As such, the centers will act as an interface for local civil society actors to seek partners and support in the broader international development community, while at the same time providing international organizations an outlet into local communities that are often under-served by the international donor community. The large geographical footprint of the CSSC networks (the successful applicant, while not bound to current CSSC-development efforts, will be expected to propose a program with approximately the same number, if not more, of partners) will provide other interested donors with a convenient partner for implementing or facilitating nationwide programs. CSSCs may also explore opportunities to conduct paid services for international organizations, which will help their sustainability. USAID implementing partner(s) will be expected, under this activity, to develop the donor-outreach capabilities of CSSC networks, and to work to create linkages between CSSCs and other international public and private donors (for example, by maintaining and distributing databases of CSSCs and local NGO partners). In Kazakhstan, for example, the American Chamber of Commerce and many local Kazakhstani businesses have expressed interest in increasing charitable giving, but have been frustrated by a lack of proven, reliable, well-institutionalized local NGO partners for distribution and monitoring purposes. CSSC networks should be able to fill this niche.
- Community-level grants management: CSSCs will also manage a small grants program focused on empowering citizens to discuss, identify and solve pressing issues in their communities through a combination of community mobilization, social partnerships, and advocacy. CSSCs will be responsible for organizing and overseeing the work of local grant committees, as well as for monitoring and evaluating projects.

No later than by the beginning of the second year of this award, national-level CSSC networks established in each country should be capable of entering into a sub-grant arrangement with the implementing partner. The exact length of time required for this transition from vertical, patron-client relations to a horizontal, partnership arrangement will depend on local conditions in each country, and the capacities of CSSC partners on the ground.¹⁰ By awarding a sub-grant to each CSSC network, rather than managing individual CSSCs directly, the RFA winner will ensure maximum autonomy for the CSSC networks as independent decision-making, service-provision and grant-making bodies. This arrangement will avoid the explicit patron-client relationships that often characterize donor-NGO relations in CAR civil society programs, and will generate the impetus to develop the management capacities of country-level CSSC

¹⁰ Generally, potential CSSC partner NGOs in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan tend to be more advanced and have more experience in network development than those in Uzbekistan, while their colleagues in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan NGOs have the shallowest track record in this regard.

networks, as interface points between the USAID implementing partner on the one hand, and individual CSSCs in the field on the other.

Given this task, it is likely that the first year of this program will include the organizational development of both individual CSSC member NGOs, as well as the intensive development of networks or associations of CSSCs. The awardee, therefore, will be expected to invest the training and technology transfers necessary to build the organizational, personnel and financial management capacities of each CSSC network, to the point where it will be capable of absorbing a large, network-wide sub-grant by the beginning of year two. Given the transfer of significant management autonomy and financial responsibility to CSSCs envisioned under this project, NGO accountability and financial sustainability (fund-raising, income-generation, etc.) issues should be stressed accordingly. The implementing partner will be expected to maintain offices in each country, whose mission will be to develop and grow CSSC networks, and – once these networks are established – to deliver technical assistance (trainings, organizational development interventions, etc.) to the networks as needed. Other innovative tools, such as intra-regional exchanges, volunteer development efforts, and “internships” may be considered. It is expected that this effort will maximize use of resources in the region in its training and technical assistance efforts. For example, Kyrgyz NGO leaders with a deep background in advocacy may be engaged to lead trainings on the topic in areas such as Turkmenistan or Tajikistan where there is less understanding of the topic. Unlike the traditional organizational chart of many foreign NGO-support projects in Central Asia, this approach unequivocally emphasizes the devolution of civil society support functions (including, but not limited to, planning and managing NGO trainings, managing small community grant programs, monitoring and evaluation of local grant programs, internal organizational development, etc.) to the local CSSC network in each country. Figure two provides some illustrative benchmarks for CSSC network development.

Figure 2: Illustrative Benchmarks for CSSC Network Development

	End of year 1	End of year 2	End of year 3
<i>Development of individual CSSCs</i>	CSSCs are established on the basis of leading local NGOs, and are delivering services to their local civil society clientele. CSSCs develop a varied sustainability plan that will allow them to have multiple sources of funding depending on what is available in each CA country.	CSSCs continue to provide services, manage local community grants program, monitor and evaluate projects, in line with workplans and budgets that are generated by the CSSCs themselves, under the auspices of country CSSC networks.	CSSCs capable of functioning both as autonomous NGOs, and as full members of a locally-registered association or network of CSSCs that is capable of contracting directly with USAID and other donors for network-wide projects.
<i>CSSC network development</i>	Each CSSC network is legally registered as a local entity, and capable of entering into a sub-grant arrangement with the USAID cooperative agreement recipient.	CSSC networks autonomously managing NGO support program, with technical assistance from foreign implementing partner representative office in each country.	CSSC networks are capable, either jointly or individually, of applying directly for and receiving USAID and other donor funding.

The development of CSSC networks requires working to strengthen individual CSSCs, while simultaneously working to develop CSSC networks with centralized executive organs capable of organizing and coordinating network-wide projects and liaising with donors. Experience has shown that Central Asian NGOs, in particular advanced NGOs, tend to be reluctant to unite into coalitions or networks. This is tied to a number of factors, not the least of which are

unclear cost-benefit calculations for individual would-be member organizations, personality conflicts among strong-willed NGO leaders (and the consequent fear of loss of autonomy), and a lack of mission for networks (or conflicts between constituent members' missions and that of the network as a whole). Stable NGO networks in Central Asia are thus rare. In light of this, and given the fact that the CSSC model postulates partnership with already-existing, leading NGOs, applicants are encouraged to seek out and engage local NGOs that have previous experience in similar NGO-support programs, and that have demonstrated the commitment and ability to work as part of a larger network.

The NGO support program envisioned in this RFA hinges on institutionally strengthening a localized network of CSSCs, as an important source of full-spectrum support to civil society actors throughout Central Asia. This approach will use the results achieved by current and previous USAID/CAR civil society programs and those of other international donors where applicable, as a starting point to deepen and strengthen networks of CSSCs in each of the five CAR countries. Currently, a total of 34 support centers operating under the CSSC model are in operation, spread unevenly among the CAR countries.¹¹ Of them, all but those in Turkmenistan are locally-registered NGOs, and are thus free to partner with organizations participating in this RFA. The Civil Society Support Initiative will work both with and through CSSCs: with them, in order to strengthen their institutional and financial sustainability; and through them, as a basis for administering the civil society support program at the local level. Because CSSCs themselves will be based on leading NGO partners, the investments of technical assistance into the CSSCs will simultaneously serve to strengthen these NGOs' institutional capacity as intermediary support organizations providing real services to a real constituency – local civil society groups in their communities.

B. Community Grants Project

The awardee is expected to build the capacity of CSSCs to manage a small grants program, with the expectation that *no later than* ~~by~~¹² the beginning of the second year of this project, CSSCs will be capable of soliciting grants, managing the review process, and conducting monitoring and evaluation of projects, under the overall guidance and supervision of CSSC network associations. Correspondingly, individual CSSCs in conjunction with the networks should assume responsibility for generating projected budgets, expenditures, and monitoring and evaluation plans, in preparation for future sub-grant agreements with the USAID/CAR implementing partner. The applicants are encouraged to design a mechanism for community grants during the first year where the implementer and the CSSCs would work together on an intensive training and preparatory period to develop the necessary skills required for grant-giving in year 2. This could also be a mentoring period for newly established CSSCs. The list of existing CSSCs can be found at <http://www.cpart.kz/maps.aspx>.

It is anticipated that the grassroots grants activity described herein will be focused on mobilizing citizens, in conjunction with NGOs or CBOs, to identify and solve key problems affecting their communities.¹³ Based on the decision of a local grant review committee (facilitated by the CSSC), these grants will support community projects in areas under-served by international donor programs. Individual projects, chosen in a participatory manner by local residents and facilitated local NGOs or CBOs, will serve a dual purpose: not only will they help to alleviate outstanding sources of social tension and poverty in outlying areas (thus serving an important conflict-mitigation function), but they will also teach residents how to mobilize and organize themselves in order to promote and defend their interests. The latter is critical to weaning Central Asian citizenry off of 70 years of Soviet-ingrained dependency on the state – a central thesis linking civil society to the broader democratization literature in the social sciences.

Many current social infrastructure projects funded by international donors struggle to find the balance between assisting citizens to overcome socio-economic hardship on the one hand while avoiding inculcating a culture of dependency on the other. The community grants funded under this RFA will attempt to minimize this danger in two ways. First of all, the community development projects will require substantial and sustained investment by citizens,

¹¹ The distribution of CSSCs in CAR is as follows: 8 in Kazakhstan, 11 in Kyrgyzstan, 7 in Uzbekistan, 3 in Turkmenistan and 5 in Tajikistan.

¹² This timeframe does not exclude the possibility that some CSSCs may have particular experience and skills to allow them to begin administering community grants during the first year of project implementation.

¹³ Recipients of these community development grants need not necessarily be registered organizations, but may include unregistered citizen initiative groups or other CBOs.

in order to qualify for outside funds. Secondly, a significant advocacy component will be incorporated into all community development projects. By explicitly linking community development projects with grassroots advocacy, this new approach will shift away from pure infrastructure reconstruction, and make more explicit the linkages between social rehabilitation projects (“pouring concrete”) and civil society development, thus avoiding duplication of efforts with the new USAID/CAR-funded CAIP program. Furthermore, the fusing of advocacy and community development at the grassroots level will broaden the pool of potential NGO implementation/facilitation partners: advocacy, legal rights and other groups not traditionally involved in social service delivery will have the opportunity to participate in this program. In addition, unlike the CAIP project, there will be no explicit focus on conflict-prone communities regions nor on pure infrastructure projects, and the small projects will be initiated and driven by the NGOs themselves. Not only will this provide a means of supporting a category of NGOs that are underserved by current USAID/CAR programming, but it will help to encourage these groups to more actively seek out and engage in community work at the grassroots. The resulting benefits will resonate in terms of constituency-building, helping human rights and other advocacy-related NGOs to overcome an oftentimes negative public image as grant-chasing, “talking heads” oriented exclusively towards foreign donors.

Accordingly, applications in response to this RFA should contain a description of a community grants program that will be focused on the following goals:

- Strengthening the management skills of CSSCs. By managing a small grants program (up to 5,000 US dollars), CSSCs will gain marketable skills that may potentially be used by other donor-funded grant programs. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of projects, meanwhile, will exercise the CSSC host NGOs’ muscles, thus furthering their organizational development.
- Increasing citizen mobilization in community development. By mandating citizen investment in community development projects, these grants will increase a sense of ownership among the community in the social infrastructure projects implemented. Coupling this with advocacy trainings on how to assert and defend citizen interests and rights will empower citizens to use these projects as catalysts for further action, rather than as ends unto themselves. The example of citizens identifying and solving socio-economic issues critical to the well-being of their communities through the simultaneous mobilization of local resources and advocacy of rights will serve as an example to neighboring communities, and hopefully inspire cascade effects in targeted areas. The problems and needs of communities, as well as opportunities for NGOs to be involved in advocacy campaigns are different in each Central Asian country, from examining and lobbying government’s budgets in Kyrgyzstan to some soft advocacy attempts and attraction of attention by local governments to the local problems in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. There should be a varied approach to what the community grants and follow-up activities may be.
- Generating pressure for greater openness and a demand for good governance at the grassroots level. In a region rife with corruption and opaqueness, the government’s common refrain of “poverty” in refusing to meet its social obligations is just as often the result of the misuse of funds, rather than their actual absence. Citizens advocating to defend their investments in community development projects will be given the skills to push for meaningful social partnerships with local business and state structures, as well as to advocate for greater citizen participation in governance. Unlike the Soviet-era paradigm, where the state provided for all, and thus citizen input was neither solicited nor accepted, these projects will attempt to link citizen participation and investment to their empowerment in managing, governing, and ensuring sustainability of the social infrastructure objects they rehabilitate. For example, groups of citizens who themselves have participated in repairing a school, rather than accept the local administration’s excuse that a lack of funds prevents hiring teachers to staff the classrooms, may instead use their newfound skills, confidence and authority in the community to demand more access to the budget, and an adequate accounting as to why such a shortfall is allowed to occur. Communities should be encouraged to plan and maintain sustainability of the proposed projects, which should be an essential part of any grant.
- Helping to further legitimize and popularize Central Asian NGOs. As discussed earlier, NGOs in Central Asia continue to suffer from a poor public image. Central Asian publics as a whole generally remain ignorant or indifferent towards civil society organizations, with NGOs oftentimes trapped between competing popular stereotypes either as anti-state dissidents or opportunistic grant-chasers. Experience has shown that involvement in concrete projects that bring tangible benefits to the community is central to the legitimization and popularization of NGOs in the broader community. By enlisting NGOs in community development, this grant program will help generate constituencies for Central Asian NGOs, and thus narrow the gap between civil society actors and their communities.

C. Institutional Grants to Leading NGOs

Ongoing feedback from Central Asian NGOs has indicated that, while USAID/CAR's current efforts to push civil society programming out into rural and other underserved areas and down into the grassroots level are commendable, they often do so at the expense of support to more mature NGOs, in particular those that are not membership-based. While the effort to develop and empower CSSCs represents in and of itself a de facto investment in the advanced indigenous NGOs hosting them, their numbers are limited. Furthermore, advocacy, human rights, and other non-membership-based organizations do not fit easily into the community development and social service provision focus typical of many foreign-funded NGO support programs. Nevertheless, they constitute some of the leading NGOs in Central Asia, both in terms of their programmatic maturity and professionalism, and – by the very nature of their missions – are often at the forefront in promoting a democratic culture among the citizenry.

This new USAID/CAR civil society activity will complement its focus on intermediary support and grassroots community projects with a an institutional grant fund that will provide direct assistance to more mature Central Asian NGOs. Applications submitted in response to this RFA should contain a description of a fund that will provide sustained support to civic organizations that are understood to be leaders in their field, and leaders in the growth of a democratic culture in their societies. It should be noted here that the terms “advanced” and/or “leading” NGO will clearly vary from country to country; an NGO considered “advanced” in Turkmenistan, for example, may not compare favorably with its counterparts in Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan.

This RFA anticipates the USAID/CAR implementing partner, in conjunction with CSSC networks, will establish and manage a grant fund that will fund basic operational costs of leading NGOs, based on the recommendations of a panel of reviewers comprised of NGO experts from each of the five Central Asian countries. This formula will address two weaknesses present in many other donor-funded civil society programs. To begin with, by providing institutional support, rather than support for a concrete project, it will help to alleviate the often frantic “grant-chasing” that Central Asian NGOs are forced to engage in to survive, much to the detriment of their international organizational consolidation and growth. Additionally, by empanelling and empowering an international (five-country) committee of local NGO experts to review grant proposals, this approach will break new ground in terms of its participatory nature and transparency. It is expected that these grants will be accompanied by packages of targeted technical assistance from the USAID/CAR activity implementer, and will be of sufficient size and duration to allow target NGOs to concentrate sufficiently on internal development and institutional capacity building for long-term sustainability. Grantees may be required to work, as a part of their program, with smaller organizations, to ensure that their expertise is shared with the less advanced part of the sector.

Depending on the availability of funds, one-year grants under this program will be awarded on a quarterly basis, based on a revolving set of finite themes. Central Asian NGOs whose missions and/or mandates correspond to one (or more) of the grant fund's rotating themes will be eligible to apply. USAID has identified four priority areas – gender, environment, students/youth, and civic rights advocacy – which may be used as a springboard for structuring this grant program. It should be emphasized that, rather than the strengths of individual projects, this design calls for review committee members to examine the applying organizations themselves, and their likely ability to serve a leading role in their respective fields, in civil society, and in the larger democratization process. Due to the regional nature of this grant fund, the USAID/CAR implementing partner may choose to manage it out of its regional office, with CSSC partners and/or implementing partner country offices assisting in program information dissemination and proposal solicitation. To avoid a conflict of interest, CSSCs will not be eligible for institutional grants.

Once the design and procedures for soliciting, reviewing, awarding and monitoring these grants has been established and proven, this grant fund will be open to buy-in from other USAID/CAR technical offices that may wish to employ it as a methodologically-sound, participatory mechanism for supporting NGOs in their own respective fields, such as health reform, enterprise development, or energy and natural resource management. There may be additional funds for the institutional grants targeting NGOs in specific areas and countries within the USAID's portfolio, however availability of such additional funds is not guaranteed.

D. Legal assistance to civil society actors

USAID/CAR's current civil society programming includes a component focused on improving the legal environment for NGOs and other civil society actors. This work has proven critical in ameliorating the operating environment for NGOs and other civil society organizations, by ensuring the passage and working to improve implementation of key NGO-related legislation, mediating relations between governments and civil society ("social partnership"), and working to ease the regulatory restrictions on the non-commercial, non-governmental sector.¹⁴

Despite its successes, the current program is limited to working primarily at the national level in order to improve the macro- legislative and regulatory environment. Ongoing research in the NGO communities of Central Asia, however, has demonstrated that lack of legal support and knowledge at the local level represents perhaps the single greatest barrier to the growth of civil society in the region. In response to this, the new Civil Society Support Initiative, while continuing to work at the national level in each Central Asian country, will expand to include a new component, designed to provide legal support to NGOs and other civil society activists on the ground. Applicants should therefore propose a program that renders legal assistance to civil society at multiple levels: at the national level, through the provision of expert commentary and lobbying to executive and legislative bodies on legislative issues pertaining to NGOs; at the local level, through on-the-spot legal consultations for civil society actors (including unregistered initiative groups); and through an educational campaign to more broadly disseminate basic legal knowledge as a means to empower civil society actors. In addition, legal assistance should be tailored to the needs of each country. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the existing legal resources already available to NGOs in the country so as not to duplicate efforts.

The legal assistance component of this RFA may be considered a secondary program that will complement the main civil society support effort. Given the specificities of legal work, this sphere of activity may be executed by a separate organization, in conjunction with the main USAID/CAR implementing partner. Applicants therefore may wish to consider submitting a proposal that foresees a partnership arrangement with other interested parties. USAID/CAR, however, acknowledges no exclusivity in bidding, i.e., interested parties (organizations) that possess the appropriate legal and technical expertise may be contained in more than one joint proposal.

VII. Special Considerations for Turkmenistan

The acute degradation of the socio-political situation in Turkmenistan over the past several years warrants special consideration. Within the framework of this project, localization of service provision to the NGO/civil society community is emphasized as a strategic goal. This stems from the fact that previous USAID/CAR programs have already invested considerable technical assistance into establishing and localizing intermediary support organizations in the form of CSSCs, throughout Central Asia. These CSSCs – or at least the CSSC model - represent a likely jumping-off point for the new activity envisioned in this RFA. Unfortunately, however, circumstances in Turkmenistan have prevented the CSSCs there from being registered as local NGOs. Despite efforts to do so, USAID/CAR programs in the civil society field there have been unable to register a single center as such. This is due to the continuing unwillingness by the Government of Turkmenistan to allow for the registration of truly independent NGOs. Other considerations in developing program ideas for Turkmenistan include the lack of political space for conducting advocacy, and government resistance to democracy programs in general.

The lack of locally-registered potential CSSC partners imposes clear limitations on the degree to which the strategic goals of this project, as outlined in Section V, can be realistically pursued in Turkmenistan. Not only have CSSCs been unable to register, but the overall non-registration of Turkmen civic organizations in general means the field of potential partner organizations who could host a CSSC is negligible. While CSSCs have not been registered, considerable efforts have been made under current USAID/CAR programs to develop and strengthen NGO support centers in Turkmenistan, and the successful applicant will be expected to make maximum use of local personnel and resources, in order to minimize the "ramping-up" time required to begin project implementation.

¹⁴ Examples of these results include Uzbekistan's progressive 1999 NGO law, Kazakhstan's Law on Non-Commercial Organizations (2001) and Law on Non-Governmental Organizations (expected 2003), and the lowering of NGO registration fees in Tajikistan from \$160 to \$25.

Given the current situation in Turkmenistan, the strategic objective of fully localizing the CSSC infrastructure is not realistic at this time. Thus, while applicants will be expected to vigorously explore means of localizing CSSCs in Turkmenistan, the expectations are that, barring significant changes to the socio-political climate, the CSSCs are likely to remain branch offices of the main USAID/CAR implementing partner, rather than localized NGO partners. Thus, benchmarks for localization of CSSCs and the CSSC network are not expected to apply to the program in Turkmenistan. Despite this, the winning applicant will nonetheless be expected to institute measures to establish a horizontal management structure with its partners in the field and to encourage partner-like (rather than employer-employee) relations, in order to prepare these “proto-CSSCs” for future localization, if and when the opportunity arrives.

The grassroots community development grants described in Section VI(B) will also require modification in Turkmenistan. Although USAID/CAR anticipates much of the process illustrated in Section VI(B) to apply equally to Turkmenistan, the project’s focus on advocacy will have to conform to the socio-political conditions in the country. While tying community development projects to advocacy campaigns in the traditional sense may be unrealistic in Turkmenistan at the current time, USAID/CAR encourages applicants to think creatively of ways to link citizen empowerment and information dissemination to the community mobilization aspect of these projects in Turkmenistan. Whereas a Kazakh community may complement a social infrastructure rehabilitation project with, for example, a campaign for more budget transparency, or Kyrgyz villagers may demand more accountability from their elected leaders, in Turkmenistan these sorts of actions are unwise at best and possibly dangerous at worst. Experience has shown, however, that advocacy-type activities can still be carried-out in Turkmenistan, but in a much more nuanced manner, for example by focusing more on establishing contacts with local state bodies, and promoting the idea of inter-sectoral “social partnerships” without yielding to cooptation by the government. Information campaigns – a lack of information is often at the heart of extreme suspicion on the part of government officials towards NGOs – should also play a more prominent role in these community projects. In Turkmenistan, the absence of independent media means that civil society activists must themselves take responsibility for disseminating information about their activities and the “third sector” in general, in order to compensate for the information vacuum in society. Applications to this RFA should recognize this. Community-based social infrastructure projects, for example, may include a small public information campaign component to inform other citizens in the community of the project’s participatory process and concrete results, and to encourage ripple effects in society. Because of a significantly oppressive environment and the fact that no independent organization has been able to register over the past few years as an NGO, the implementer will be encouraged to work and give grants to a broader range of organizations, including unregistered public organizations and initiative groups. The applicants should address in their applications how they plan to go about working with non-registered groups.

VIII. Expected Results

Work performed under this award will contribute to the achievement of Strategic Objective 2.1, as outlined in the USAID/CAR Assistance Strategy for Central Asia 2001-2005, *Strengthened Democratic Culture Among Citizens and Target Institutions*. This objective reflects USAID’s emphasis on building an active constituency for democracy. This activity will also serve to further the following intermediate and lower-level results:

IR 2.1.1 Stronger and more sustainable civic organizations (Indicator: NGO Sustainability Index¹⁵);

LLR 2.1.1 Improved advocacy skills;

LLR 2.1.1.2 Increased institutional and financial viability of NGOs

LLR 2.1.1.3 Improved ability to find and represent constituency

LLR 2.1.1.4 Community based civic action programs expanded/initiated

LLR 2.1.2.4 Improved information dissemination

LLR 2.1.3.1 Improved legal and regulatory environment for NGOs

¹⁵ For more information on the Index, see http://www.usaid.gov/regions/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/

The activity should also indirectly contribute toward the following intermediate and lower-level results:

IR 2.1.3 Enhanced opportunities for citizen participation in governance;

LLR 2.1.3.2 Increased NGO and citizen involvement in public affairs.

As part of the proposal, applicants should develop tangible results-oriented indicators that measure progress towards the SO 2.1 and the Intermediate and Lower Level Results noted above. In addition, USAID expects the following benchmarks to be met:

- Relationship with potential CSSC partner NGOs established within the first three months;
- Formal networks of CSSCs formed and operational (i.e., responsible for quality control and overall financial and programmatic management of NGO support service provision) by the end of the first year (not applicable in Turkmenistan);
- Beginning in year two of the program, applicant issues sub-grant to CSSC network partners in each country (save Turkmenistan), based on proposal generated by CSSC networks;
- Regional rotating grant fund (as described in Section VI(C)) for advanced NGOs initiated no later than 6 months into the program.

IX. Administrative and Staff Structure

Applicants should plan to include a regional director to be based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where the central office of USAID/CAR is located. The regional director will be responsible for overall program management, will supervise country offices, and will serve as the main contact point with USAID/CAR. A small regional staff will assist in overall program quality control, financial management, regional activities, and donor liaison issues. Proposals should include provisions for small country-level offices that will initially be dedicated to CSSC network development, and, once the networks are established, will provide as-needed technical assistance to CSSC partners. It is anticipated that the country-level offices will be staffed with local employees to the maximum extent practicable. The goal is that by the end of the project, the CSSC networks will be strong enough such that implementing partner country offices may not be necessary. Short-term trainers and other consultants, both regional and international, will provide additional expertise as needed. However, this need should be determined by local CSSC partners, and should be included by CSSC networks in the costs of the sub-grant proposals they will generate and submit to the USAID/CAR implementing partner in out-years, beginning in year two (see benchmarks).

X. Coordination Issues

To ensure cost effectiveness, achieve synergy, and maximize impact, the Civil Society Support Initiative will be implemented in coordination with other USAID supported projects. The grantee should ensure coordination with (1) other USAID/CAR funded implementing partners, where applicable; and (2) other donor organizations and international financial institutions providing civil society assistance in Central Asia. USAID funded programs that support (directly or indirectly) civil society development in Central Asia include but are not limited to Eurasia Foundation, ABA/CEELI, IFES, CAIP and NDI.

Coordination includes, but is not limited to, sharing of materials developed under this task order, informing other development organizations of potential and planned activities, sharing information and, where appropriate, holding joint programs, and participating in coordination and strategy meetings.

X.XI. Parameters for Proposals

DM 115-03-008

Recognizing that various approaches may have merit, this RFA seeks an implementing partner that, on the basis of its experience, can propose cost-effective ways of building democratic culture through strengthening civic organizations and improving the legal environment for civil society in Central Asia. Applications should cover all five countries discussed above. Applicants are asked to provide a proposal with an executive summary with varied approaches reflecting needs and issues for each Central Asian country¹⁶, as well as a program description and budget for each country. In sum, while exercising full creativity and innovation in program design, applicants are asked to consider the USAID/CAR project vision elaborated in previous sections, and to address the following fundamental issues, by country, in their proposals:

1. describe how transparency and accountability to the NGO/civil society community will be ensured at each stage of program implementation. To the maximum extent possible, activities, such as participant selection, grant review processes, training/trainer selection procedures, etc., should be made known to the ultimate project clients – NGOs and other civil society actors.
2. describe how client feedback is obtained and used, including the methodology used for performance measurement and how the collection and analysis of relevant and reliable data will be used for more effective management and continuous improvement of service provision to customers.
3. clearly define how the organization will maximize the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the program, including but not limited to programs of conferences, workshops, seminars, and round tables, and efficient planning and scheduling of technical assistance and other inputs.

The proposed life of the assistance program described herein is thirty-six months, to begin on or about July 1, 2003. Towards the end of the date of the Cooperative Agreement, USAID/CAR will make a determination as to the feasibility and efficacy of extending the agreement period. Within a general thirty-six-month budgetary envelope of between \$16,900,000 and \$17,000,000¹⁶, applicants are requested to present a budget, broken down by country, that is results-based, includes costs covered by other entities (cost-sharing arrangements or matching funds), and links costs to projected impact. Cost sharing is encouraged. USAID may reject all applications if they are not deemed sufficiently responsive.

¹⁶ Applicants may use the following figures as a guideline for country-by-country funding breakdown for the first 12 months of the project: Kazakhstan - \$1,000,000; Kyrgyzstan - \$1,100,000; Tajikistan - \$1,200,000; Turkmenistan - \$850,000; and Uzbekistan - \$1,600,000.

SECTION D

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES, AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF RECIPIENT [1][2]

PART I - CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

1. ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING NON-DISCRIMINATION IN FEDERALLY ASSISTED PROGRAMS

(a) The recipient hereby assures that no person in the United States shall, on the bases set forth below, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving financial assistance from USAID, and that with respect to the grant for which application is being made, it will comply with the requirements of:

(1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000-d), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(3) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (Pub. L. 95-478), which prohibits discrimination based on age in the delivery of services and benefits supported with Federal funds;

(4) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance (whether or not the programs or activities are offered or sponsored by an educational institution); and

(5) USAID regulations implementing the above nondiscrimination laws, set forth in Chapter II of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) If the recipient is an institution of higher education, the Assurances given herein extend to admission practices and to all other practices relating to the treatment of students or clients of the institution, or relating to the opportunity to participate in the provision of services or other benefits to such individuals, and shall be applicable to the entire institution unless the recipient establishes to the satisfaction of the USAID Administrator that the institution's practices in designated parts or programs of the institution will in no way affect its practices in the program of the institution for which financial assistance is sought, or the beneficiaries of, or participants in, such programs.

(c) This assurance is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts, or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the recipient by the Agency, including installment payments after such date on account of applications for Federal financial assistance which were approved before such date. The recipient recognizes and agrees that such Federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in this Assurance, and that the United States shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this Assurance. This Assurance is binding on the recipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign this Assurance on behalf of the recipient.

2. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS

(a) Instructions for Certification

(1) By signing and/or submitting this application or grant, the recipient is providing the certification set out below.

(2) The certification set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the agency determined to award the grant. If it is later determined that the recipient knowingly rendered a false certification, or otherwise violates the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the agency, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, may take action authorized under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.

(3) For recipients other than individuals, Alternate I applies.

(4) For recipients who are individuals, Alternate II applies.

(b) Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Alternate I

(1) The recipient certifies that it will provide a drug-free workplace by:

(A) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the applicant's/grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;

(B) Establishing a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about--

1. The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
2. The recipient's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
3. Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
4. The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;

(C) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (b)(1)(A);

(D) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (b)(1)(A) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will--

1. Abide by the terms of the statement; and
2. Notify the employer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction;

(E) Notifying the agency within ten days after receiving notice under subparagraph (b)(1)(D)1, from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction;

(F) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 days of receiving notice under subparagraph (b)(1)(D)2., with respect to any employee who is so convicted--

1. Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or
2. Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;

(G) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug- free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(B), (b)(1)(C), (b)(1)(D), (b)(1)(E) and (b)(1)(F).

(2) The recipient shall insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)

Alternate II

The recipient certifies that, as a condition of the grant, he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant.

3. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS -- PRIMARY COVERED TRANSACTIONS [3]

(a) Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out below. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the department or agency's determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.

3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the department or agency determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the department or agency to whom this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective primary participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

5. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meaning set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. [4] You may contact the department or agency to which this proposal is being submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency entering into this transaction.

7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transaction," [5] provided by the department or agency entering into this covered transaction, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the methods and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Nonprocurement List.

DM 115-03-008

9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealing.

10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

(b) Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, the it and its principals:

(A) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;

(B) Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(C) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(B) of this certification;

(D) Have not within a three-year period proceeding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

4. CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

5. PROHIBITION ON ASSISTANCE TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS FOR COVERED COUNTRIES AND INDIVIDUALS (ADS 206)

USAID reserves the right to terminate this [Agreement/Contract], to demand a refund or take other appropriate measures if the [Grantee/ Contractor] is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140. The undersigned shall review USAID ADS 206 to determine if any certification are required for Key Individuals or Covered Participants.

If there are COVERED PARTICIPANTS: USAID reserves the right to terminate assistance to, or take or take other appropriate measures with respect to, any participant approved by USAID who is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140.

The recipient has reviewed and is familiar with the proposed grant format and the applicable regulations, and takes exception to the following (use a continuation page as necessary):

Solicitation No. _____

Application/Proposal No. _____

Date of Application/Proposal _____

Name of Recipient _____

Typed Name and Title _____

Signature _____ Date _____

[1] FORMATS\GRNTCERT: Rev. 06/16/97 (ADS 303.6, E303.5.6a) [2] When these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Recipient are used for cooperative agreements, the term "Grant" means "Cooperative Agreement". [3] The recipient must obtain from each identified subgrantee and (sub)contractor, and submit with its application/proposal, the Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -- Lower Tier Transactions, set forth in Attachment A hereto. The recipient should reproduce additional copies as necessary. [4] See ADS Chapter E303.5.6a, 22 CFR 208, Annex1, App A. [5] For USAID, this clause is entitled "Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion (March 1989)" and is set forth in the grant standard provision entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Related Matters" if the recipient is a U.S. nongovernmental organization, or in the grant standard provision entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters" if the recipient is a non-U.S. nongovernmental organization.

PART II - OTHER STATEMENTS OF RECIPIENT

1. AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS

The recipient represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the Government and to bind the recipient in connection with this application or grant:

Name	Title	Telephone No.	Facsimile No.
<hr/>			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

2. TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN)

If the recipient is a U.S. organization, or a foreign organization which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., please indicate the recipient's TIN:

TIN: _____

3. CONTRACTOR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - DATA UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM (DUNS) NUMBER

(a) In the space provided at the end of this provision, the recipient should supply the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number applicable to that name and address. Recipients should take care to report the number that identifies the recipient's name and address exactly as stated in the proposal.

(b) The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services. If the recipient does not have a DUNS number, the recipient should call Dun and Bradstreet directly at 1-800-333-0505. A DUNS number will be provided immediately by telephone at no charge to the recipient. The recipient should be prepared to provide the following information:

- (1) Recipient's name.
- (2) Recipient's address.
- (3) Recipient's telephone number.
- (4) Line of business.
- (5) Chief executive officer/key manager.
- (6) Date the organization was started.
- (7) Number of people employed by the recipient.
- (8) Company affiliation.

(c) Recipients located outside the United States may obtain the location and phone number of the local Dun and Bradstreet Information Services office from the Internet Home Page at <http://www.dbisna.com/dbis/customer/custlist.htm>. If an offeror is unable to locate a local service center, it may send an e-mail to Dun and Bradstreet at globalinfo@dbisma.com.

The DUNS system is distinct from the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) system.

DUNS: _____

4. LETTER OF CREDIT (LOC) NUMBER

If the recipient has an existing Letter of Credit (LOC) with USAID, please indicate the LOC number:

LOC: _____

5. PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

(a) Applicability. This applies to the procurement of goods and services planned by the recipient (i.e., contracts, purchase orders, etc.) from a supplier of goods or services for the direct use or benefit of the recipient in conducting the program supported by the grant, and not to assistance provided by the recipient (i.e., a subgrant or subagreement) to a subgrantee or subrecipient in support of the subgrantee's or subrecipient's program. Provision by the recipient of the requested information does not, in and of itself, constitute USAID approval.

(b) Amount of Procurement. Please indicate the total estimated dollar amount of goods and services which the recipient plans to purchase under the grant:

\$ _____

(c) Nonexpendable Property. If the recipient plans to purchase nonexpendable equipment which would require the approval of the Agreement Officer, please indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types, quantities of each, and estimated unit costs. Nonexpendable equipment for which the Agreement Officer's approval to purchase is required is any article of nonexpendable tangible personal property charged directly to the grant, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED UNIT COST
----------------------------	----------	---------------------

(d) Source, Origin, and Componentry of Goods. If the recipient plans to purchase any goods/commodities which are not of U.S. source and/or U.S. origin, please indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, and probable source and/or origin. "Source" means the country from which a commodity is shipped to the cooperating country or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located therein at the time of purchase. However, where a commodity is shipped from a free port or bonded warehouse in the form in which received therein, "source" means the country from which the commodity was shipped to the free port or bonded warehouse. Any commodity whose source is a non-Free World country is ineligible for USAID financing. The "origin" of a commodity is the country or area in which a commodity is mined, grown, or produced. A commodity is produced when, through manufacturing, processing, or substantial and major assembling of components, a commercially recognized new commodity results, which is substantially different in basic characteristics or in purpose or utility from its components. Merely packaging various items together for a particular procurement or relabeling items does not constitute production of a commodity. Any commodity whose origin is a non-Free World country is ineligible for USAID financing. "Components" are the goods which go directly into the production of a produced commodity. Any component from a non-Free World country makes the commodity ineligible for USAID financing.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED UNIT COST	GOODS COMPONENTS	PROBABLE SOURCE	GOODS COMPONENTS
-------------------------------	----------	------------------------	---------------------	--------------------	---------------------

(e) Restricted Goods. If the recipient plans to purchase any restricted goods, please indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, intended use, and probable source and/or origin. Restricted goods are Agricultural Commodities, Motor Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals, Pesticides, Rubber Compounding Chemicals and Plasticizers, Used Equipment, U.S. Government-Owned Excess Property, and Fertilizer.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED UNIT COST	PROBABLE SOURCE	PROBABLE ORIGIN	INTENDED USE
-------------------------------	----------	------------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------

DM 115-03-008

(f) Supplier Nationality. If the recipient plans to purchase any goods or services from suppliers of goods and services whose nationality is not in the U.S., please indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each good or service, estimated costs of each, probable nationality of each non-U.S. supplier of each good or service, and the rationale for purchasing from a non-U.S. supplier. Any supplier whose nationality is a non-Free World country is ineligible for USAID financing.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION Rationale (Generic) NON-US	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED UNIT COST	PROBABLE SUPPLIER (Non-US Only)	NATIONALITY for
--	----------	------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------

(g) Proposed Disposition. If the recipient plans to purchase any nonexpendable equipment with a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, please indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the proposed disposition of each such item. Generally, the recipient may either retain the property for other uses and make compensation to USAID (computed by applying the percentage of federal participation in the cost of the original program to the current fair market value of the property), or sell the property and reimburse USAID an amount computed by applying to the sales proceeds the percentage of federal participation in the cost of the original program (except that the recipient may deduct from the federal share \$500 or 10% of the proceeds, whichever is greater, for selling and handling expenses), or donate the property to a host country institution, or otherwise dispose of the property as instructed by USAID.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic) DISPOSITION	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED UNIT COST	PROPOSED
--	----------	---------------------	----------

6. PAST PERFORMANCE REFERENCES

On a continuation page, please provide a list of the ten most current U.S. Government and/or privately-funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc., and the name, address, and telephone number of the Contract/Agreement Officer or other contact person.

7. TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

The recipient, by checking the applicable box, represents that -

(a) If the recipient is a U.S. entity, it operates as ☐ a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of, ☐ an individual, ☐ a partnership, ☐ a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, ☐ a state or local governmental organization, ☐ a private college or university, ☐ a public college or university, ☐ an international organization, or ☐ a joint venture; or

(b) If the recipient is a non-U.S. entity, it operates as ☐ a corporation organized under the laws of _____ (country), ☐ an individual, ☐ a partnership, ☐ a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, ☐ a nongovernmental educational institution, ☐ a governmental organization, ☐ an international organization, or ☐ a joint venture.

8. ESTIMATED COSTS OF COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS

The following are the estimate(s) of the cost of each separate communications product (i.e., any printed material [other than non-color photocopy material], photographic services, or video production services) which is anticipated under the grant. Each estimate must include all the costs associated with preparation and execution of the product. Use a continuation page as necessary.

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND
VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS**

(a) Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, has the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. 1/ You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier covered Transaction," 2/ without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Non procurement List.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

(b) Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Solicitation No. _____

Application/Proposal No. _____

Date of Application/Proposal _____

Name of Applicant/Subgrantee _____

Typed Name and Title _____

Signature _____

1/ See ADS Chapter 303, 22 CFR 208.

2/ For USAID, this clause is entitled "Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion (March 1989)" and is set forth in the USAID grant standard provision for U.S. nongovernmental organizations entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Related Matters" (see ADS Chapter 303), or in the USAID grant standard provision for non-U.S. nongovernmental organizations entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters" (see ADS Chapter 303).

KEY INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION NARCOTICS OFFENSES AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

1. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
2. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
3. I am not and have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain key individuals of organizations must sign this Certification.

2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION NARCOTICS OFFENSES AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

1. I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

a. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.

b. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.

c. I am not or have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

2. I understand that USAID may terminate my training if it is determined that I engaged in the above conduct during the last ten years or during my USAID training.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain participants must sign this Certification.

2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

FORMATS\GRNTCERT: Rev. 06/16/97 (ADS 303.6, E303.5.6a) When these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Recipient are used for cooperative agreements, the term "Grant" means "Cooperative Agreement". The recipient must obtain from each identified subgrantee and (sub)contractor, and submit with its application/proposal, the Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -- Lower Tier Transactions, set forth in Attachment A hereto. The recipient should reproduce additional copies as necessary. See ADS Chapter E303.5.6a, 22 CFR 208, Annex1, App A. For USAID, this clause is entitled "Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion (March 1989)" and is set forth in the grant standard provision entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Related Matters" if the recipient is a U.S. nongovernmental organization, or in the grant standard provision entitled "Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters" if the recipient is a non-U.S. nongovernmental organization.